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LINKS BETWEEN SOCIAL MOBILITY, POVERTY AND INCLINATIONS TO RIOT EXPLORED

BEVERLY HILLS: Research findings linking poverty, mobility, and attitudes toward active protest among urban Negroes were published this week by a Cleveland research team. Writing on "Deprivation, Mobility, and Orientation Toward Protest of the Urban Poor," DON R. BOWEN (Case Western Reserve University, Department of Political Science), ELINOR R. BOWEN (Cleveland State University, Political Science Department), SHELDON R. GAWISER (a graduate student in political science at Case Western Reserve) and LOUIS H. MASOTTI (Director of Case Western Reserve's newly created Civil Violence Research Center,) published their paper in the March-April issue of The AMERICAN BEHAVIORAL SCIENTIST.

Their article is an analysis of an opinion survey taken among the poor of Cleveland nine months after the Hough riot of 1966. The authors analyze the relationship between feelings of personal deprivation among the poor and attitudes concerning political protest. Their major finding is that respondents who approve of the picketing, marching, and demonstrations associated with nonviolence and the civil rights movement, and believe these methods to be effective, also think rioting is an effective political tactic, i.e., they approve of it. Thus, among the urban poor, rioting is seen as part of the general protest behavior which is distinct from the more conventional political tactics like voting.

A second finding of the study shows that both those who expect to advance toward goal achievement and those who expect to be further from goal achievement are more likely to approve of protest than those who expect no change in their life situation. Thus, the Cleveland data provides some support for both the

theory of rising expectation as an explanation for the riots, and the theory that downward mobility leads to political protest.

Don Bowen is author of Political Behavior of the American Public and co-editor (with Masotti) of a book on urban riots to be published this fall which will be based, in part, on this special ABS issue. Masotti, a fellow member of Case Western Reserve's Political Science Department (in addition to his responsibilities with its Violence Research Center) served as a consultant to the National Commission on Civil Disorders, and is co-editor of the recently published Metropolis in Crisis.

The special issue of ABS in which their article appears is available from Sage Publications, Inc., 275 South Beverly Drive, Beverly Hills, California 90212, at $3.50 a copy. Bulk rates are also available.